Tyche

Tyche (English: /ˈtaɪki/; Greek: Τύχη Ancient Greek: [tý.kʰɛ:][1] Modern Greek: [ˈti.çi] "luck"; Roman equivalent: Fortuna) was the presiding tutelary deity who governed the fortune and prosperity of a city, its destiny. In Classical Greek mythology she is the daughter of Aphrodite and Zeus or Hermes.

In literature, she might be given various genealogies, as a daughter of Hermes and Aphrodite, or considered as one of the Oceanids, daughters of Oceanus, and Tethys, or of Zeus.[2] She was connected with Nemesis[3] and Agathos Daimon ("good spirit").

The Greek historian Polybius believed that when no cause can be discovered to events such as floods, droughts, frosts, or even in politics, then the cause of these events may be fairly attributed to Tyche.[4]

The Tyche of Antioch, Roman copy of a bronze by Eutychides (Galleria dei Candelabri, Vatican Museums)

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Worship

The remains of a Greek temple of Tyche

Increasingly during the Hellenistic period, cities venerated their own specific iconic version of Tyche, wearing a mural crown (a crown like the walls of the city).

Tyche had temples at Caesarea Maritima, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople. In Alexandria the *Tychaeon*, the Greek temple of Tyche, was described by Libanius as one of the most magnificent of the entire Hellenistic world.[5]

She was uniquely venerated at Itanos in Crete, as *Tyche Protogeneia*, linked with the Athenian Protogeneia ("firstborn"), daughter of Erechtheus, whose self-sacrifice saved the city.[6]

Stylianos Spyridacis[7] concisely expressed Tyche's appeal in a Hellenistic world of arbitrary violence and unmeaning reverses: "In the turbulent years of the Epigoni of Alexander, an awareness of the instability of human affairs led people to believe that Tyche, the blind mistress of Fortune, governed mankind with an inconstancy which explained the vicissitudes of the time."[8]

Depictions

Tyche appears on many coins of the Hellenistic period in the three centuries before the Christian era, especially from cities in the Aegean. Unpredictable turns of fortune drive the complicated plotlines of Hellenistic romances, such as, *Leucippe and Clitophon* or *Daphnis and Chloe*. She experienced a resurgence in another era of uneasy change, the final days of publicly sanctioned Paganism, between the late-fourth-century emperors Julian and Theodosius I, who definitively closed the temples. The effectiveness of her

capricious power even achieved respectability in philosophical circles during that generation, although among poets it was a commonplace to revile her for a fickle harlot.[9]

In Greco-Roman and medieval art she was depicted as carrying a cornucopia (horn of plenty), an emblematic gubernaculum (ship's rudder), and the wheel of fortune, or she may stand on the wheel, presiding over the entire circle of fate.

The constellation of Virgo is sometimes identified as the heavenly figure of Tyche,[10] as well as other goddesses such as Demeter and Astraea.

Polychrome marble statue depicting the goddess Tyche holding the infant Plutus in her arms, second century CE, Istanbul Archaeological Museum

See also

- Tyche of Constantinople

Tyche on the reverse of thisbase metal coin by Gordian III, 238-244 CE

References

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2. Pindar, Twelfth Olympian Ode.
3. As on an Attic amphora, fifth century BCE Antikensammlung Berlin illustrated at Theoi.com(http://www.theoi.com/Daimon/Tykhe.html).
4. Polybius. *The Rise Of The Roman Empire*, Page 29, Penguin, 1979.
5. Libanius, in *Progymnasmata* 1114R, noted by Spyridakis 1969:45.
6. Noted by Spyridakis, who demonstrated that earlier suggestions of a source in Fortuna Primigenia of Praeneste was anachronistic.
7. University of California Davis faculty: Stylianos Spyridakis(http://history.ucdavis.edu/faculty/Spyridakis_Stylianos) Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20100516061656/http://history.ucdavis.edu/faculty/Spyridakis_Stylianos) 2010-05-16 at the Wayback Machine
8. Spyridakis, Stylianos. "The Itanian cult of Tyche Protogeneia", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* **18**.1 (January 1969:42-48) p. 42.
9. C. M. Bowra, "Palladas on Tyche" *The Classical Quarterly* New Series, **10**.1 (May 1960:118-128).
10. DK Multimedia: Eyewitness Encyclopedia, *Stardome, Virgo: miscellaneous section*

External links

- Media related to Tyche at Wikimedia Commons

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